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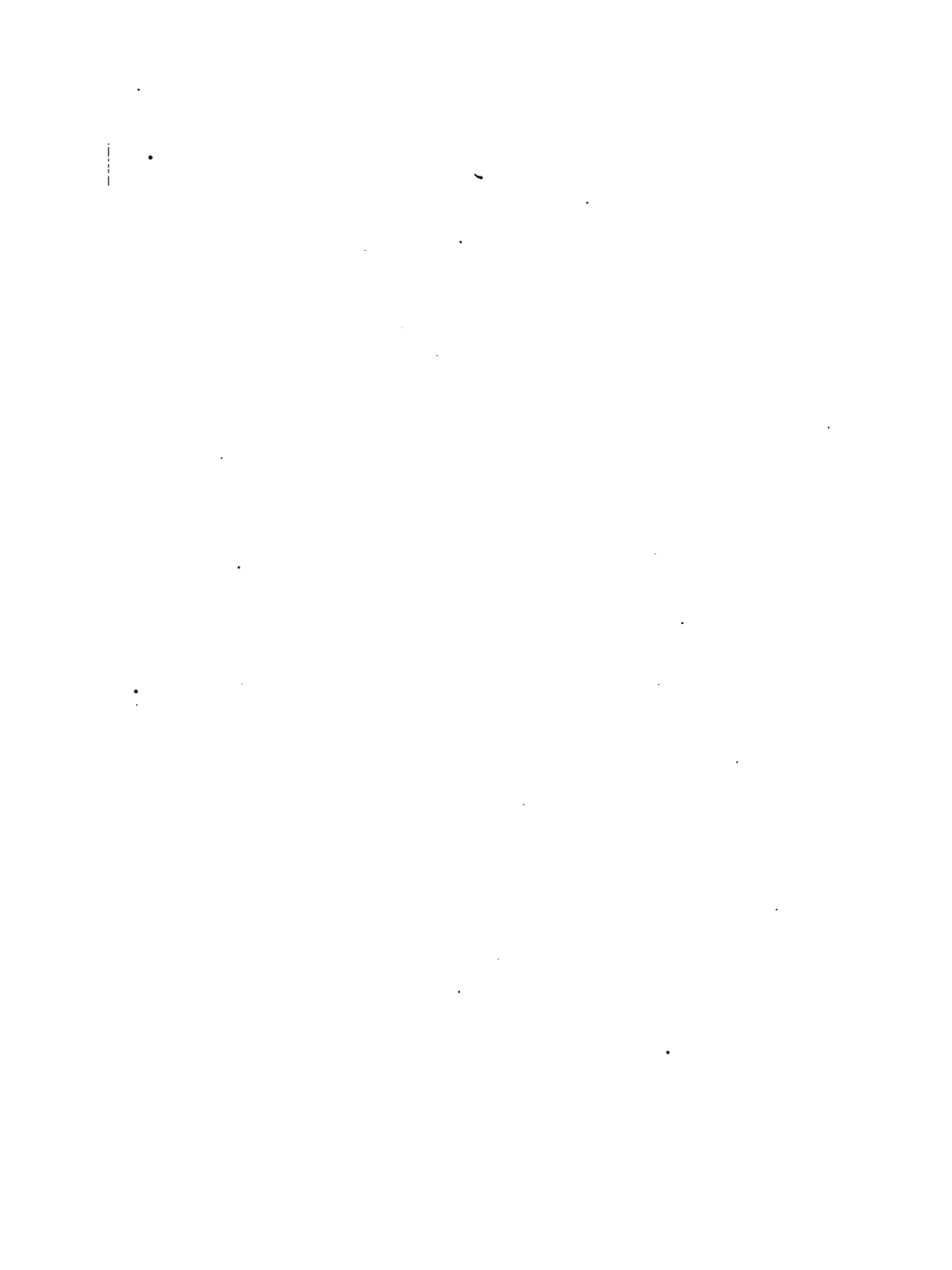
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RUTHVEN'S
REVENGE



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RUTHVEN'S REVENGE

AND

Other Metrical Tales.

BY

LOCHNAGAR.



Edinburgh:

MACLACHLAN AND STEWART.

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Contents.

RUTHVEN'S REVENGE	<i>Page</i> I
THE PIRATE,	26
STRATHAVEN CASTLE,	39
MASSACRE OF EIGG,	54



Ruthven's Revenge.

I.

BY lofty crags which stem the tide
That rolls to Scotia's western side :
Cragg which conceal the dreary cave
Where oft the noble and the brave,

By every hope disown'd,
As war protracted fed distress,
And left no shadow of success,
Secure asylum found.
Here, too, still fertile in her store
Of themes, traditionary lore
Speaks of a beaming spectred light,
Which floods the dismal cell by night—
Tells that the Demon of the Storm
Sometimes displays his awful form ;

Charging the elements to rise,
And battle with the sea and skies.

II.

Nor this alone : of raptured love,
In female grace display'd,
Through hostile ages she hath strove
To speak of Gayford's maid.
Here virtue lent her every charm
Which can the female passions warm ;
In air and manner dignified,
She her companions far outvied :
How musical her mellow voice,
That deep impression made
On the glad object of her choice,-
As he his amours paid !
Beauty her impress sure might trace
Upon her well-proportion'd face :
Expressive were her azure eyes,
And soft the smile that from her fell :
Nobly her forehead seem'd to rise—
Told where intelligence did dwell :
Still gently o'er her lovely neck
The auburn hair in ringlets lay.
O ! where the youth, fond reader say,
Who would not fight for Mary's sake !

III.

She was an only daughter, and
Her charms were prized throughout the land.
Though of a noble family sprung,

In whose veins flow'd the Norman blood—
A race by ancient poets sung,

By conquering William's side they stood.
Who has not heard Montgomery's name?—
Still Wales and Ayr resound his fame.
Her branch had felt stern fortune's rage,
And lost its wide-stretch'd heritage—

A minor fragment now remain'd
To her of all her fathers gain'd.

One grateful parent was no more,

He fell at Bothwell's dreadful fight;

The second Charles' arms he bore,

And died in gallant Monmouth's fight.

In Gayford's cottage on the base

Of that rude crag where Aufer plays,

In cherish'd solitude still stay'd

The mother of the beauteous maid.

IV.

There rolls a clear but noisy rill,

Which Gayford's northern side adorns;

It takes its course from yonder hill,
And by the tower of Craighall turns.
The angler, at approach of noon,
Here lonely may be seen ;
And often has the horn'd moon
'Held Mary on the green.
In flowing robe she walk'd alone
From Gayford to the Angler's Stone.
But hark ! a light step greets the ear,—
Fair Mary knows its sound :
Her darling William doth appear,
And to her arms doth bound !
What higher joy can heav'n above
On human kind bestow,
Than lend its smile in blushing love,
Which fills the jeer of woe !

v.

The handsome form of William Graham
Scarce twenty winters' snows had seen ;
Vigorous was his hardy frame,
Striking his hazel eyeballs' gleam !
Pure was his love-entranced heart,
Vermilion was his laughing cheek !
Here also Knowledge seem'd to start,
And William for her model seek !

He, as a thinker, in the shade
 Cast many of maturer years ;
Moral Philosophy, 'tis said,
A favourite study he had made ;
 Loved he the grave and learned fears.
Oft on the page of history
The noble youth had cast his eye ;
Admired he each bold Spartan fire—
 Admired he the Athenian sage !
O'erjoy'd to mark the Roman fire,
 And Hannibal's vindictive rage ;
Or Marcus Brutus raise the knife
 That snatch'd the imperial despot's life.
And, like each patriot Scottish son,
 The name of Wallace stirr'd his blood ;
He heard how Stirling bridge was won,
 And England's warriors swell'd the flood.
But chief admired the glorious field
 Where Scotland saw her fortunes turn—
Saw England's hundred thousand yield
 At the immortal Bannockburn !
Still, William oft on state affairs
 His prized, his leisure moments spent,
 Musing, as o'er the plains he went,
How Alfred father'd England's cares,
Conquering the mighty Danes that braved the land ;

Maintaining justice with an able hand !
 He loved the principle the Charter gave,
 And forth as freedom's champion stood ;
 Yet many of the points he would,
 On gen'rous thought and reason, waive.
 Science was then in infancy.
 The rapturous swell of poetry
 Recall'd his love of other days :
 Himself a poet was,
 And in soul-stirring magic lays
 Upheld the glorious cause
 Of liberty of conscience—and
 Religious freedom in the land !

VI.

Such is our hero : such the son
 And heir of valiant Henry Graham,
 The knight whose prowess great him won
 In Flemish fight a deathless name !
 Supported he Blake's mighty wars,
 And spoke indignant of the scars
 The fire of furious Holland gave,
 When dark destruction swept the wave.
 Though of a branch of famed Montrose,
 In youth he Cromwell's cause upheld ;
 An en'my was to Claverhouse—

Rejoiced he o'er the gory field
That laid the victor-hero dead—
(Ah! then the hopes of Stuart fled!)
Craighall was his, whose feudal sway
Three hundred vassals did obey.

VII.

"But, William," smiling, Mary said,
As on his breast her head she laid,
"What sorrows prey upon thy mind?
Shall galling recollections dare
To type upon thy forehead care—
Alas! in thee a victim find?"
"My father, ah!" was the reply—
Was follow'd swiftly by a sigh;
His throbbing bosom scarce could tell
The source from which these sorrows fell.
"Enough," confused, his Mary said—
"Enough, too well the rest I know;
The unfeeling wretch some scheme hath laid—
Wretch! cause of fair Montgomery's woe:
Alas, alas! thy father hears
This plot for our destruction laid,
I guess;" and here the falling tears
A while her sad narration stay'd.
"Alas that ere my charms begat,

Ruthven, in thee a fuitor keen ;
From the beginning well you knew
I ne'er could give my love to you.
All thy false ways did Mary spurn,
That her intentions thou mightst learn—
Since this neglect, knave, thou hast set
On dire destruction : have I been,
Have I, and must I—must I yet
Bend low to thy relentless spleen ?”

VIII.

She said ; and in a swoon she fell
While resting on her William's breast.
And while on her sharp anguish stole,
Array'd with fell despondency,
He strove to soothe her agony,
And set her wayward fears to rest :
Her wonted spirits 'gan to rise—
Her rapid fancy gleam'd again ;
Catching a glance of William's eyes,
She rose revigor'd from the pain—
An hour flash'd by : the echo yet
Of gentle whispers might be caught—
Embraces with embraces met,
With cheerful Heaven's applauses fraught—
Laugh quickly met with amorous smile,

And time seem'd short the happy while—

Lips met with lips—a parting sign !

Our hero's anxious father waits

The arrival of his worthy son,

Who still with Gayford's Mary prates :

“ When Night has hush'd the twilight's reign,

And spread her stillness o'er the plain,

By Craighall's woody knoll shall I

To-morrow wait for thee :

O that the blessed hour sped nigh !

O fad—how fad—it is to leave

The one to whom my heart doth cleave !

But it must be : my father's sound

Already rings his hall around—

That mighty sound for me ! ”

IX.

The lovers part : our hero takes

The antique road to green Craighall ;

On either side the giant brakes

High overlook the heavy wall.

Here oft hath antiquarian strove

To point the dark, the sacred grove,

Where Druids kept the spoils of war.

Here, glancing o'er the lofty trees,

A tower'd cairn the stranger sees,

Where oft the infants' rending cries
Were heard at Druids' sacrifice :
The transmigration of the soul
 To bright or gloomy regions far,
 The fathers taught with some regard.
 Their feeble voice the Britons heard—
 The infamy on sceptic past,
 The sneers at every doubter cast,
Awhile superior reason stole.
Now onward, and he gains the well
 Where fairy elves, 'tis said,
Met with a modest, beauteous belle,
 Come by the eastern glade.
They carried her to Fairyland,
 Its pleasant fights to view ;
Admired the Queen of Elfin's wand :
Again she came to earth transform'd,
And many a gallant squire deform'd
 She once as suitor knew !
And now a rivulet he gains
 That tells its tragic tale ;
Here lusty Robert of the Mains
 In duel boldly fell—
And here the Wizard's rustling oak
Climbs o'er the bosom of a rock.

X.

Ah! how uncouth our hero's mood,
While pacing through the lonely wood
That by the mansion grew,
In sober, deep soliloquy,
The past he did review,
And fancied dark futurity.
"What monster lies are often form'd
To scoff at fallen greatness! Ah!
How oft is cruel deed perform'd,
And yet th' offender braves the law!
Oh! that I saw this dastard bleed,
And pay the forfeit of his deed?
That justice would his name disgrace,
And stamp with infamy his race—
That race ignoble, prone to crime,
That thrice dishonour'd hath our time!

XI.

"Full oft hath dang'rous Ruthven told
(That man so oft to perjury fold!)
My father lies of Mary's worth—
A fairer gem ne'er deck'd the north!
He, prone such stories to sustain,
Frowns bitterly upon his son—

Yet all these frowns on me are vain !
He from the first disdain'd this maid,
Because her fire gave Stuart aid

Before his crown he won.

In pomp and wealth my father rolls,
In Spanish and in Fleming spoils ;
And overlooks the fading name

Of once renown'd Montgomery :
And yet, how true this very fame

Presents the highest charm to me !
Mean is the man who dares to smile,
While frowning fate triumphs the while :
Expand thy weapons, jealousy,
That worth and gentleness would stain,
For manhood doth them now disdain.

Ruthven, if yet within my reach

You ere should chance to stray,

Direful the lesson I will teach

Thee, coward, of thy way !

Father, I nobly thee forgive ;

Yet pity thou art led

With faithful William thus to strive,

And accept Ruthven's aid.

The time shall come when thou shalt see,

And pity, ah ! my wrong ;

For gen'rous thou hast been to me,

Except in this alone.
And oh ! my Mary, I rejoice
 To think thy wonted spirits rose,
Even when fail'd my faltering voice
 To warn thee of approaching woes.
O ! may my presence ere inspire
 Thy pure, thy rapturous heart with joy ;
And never sure shall sorrow dire
 Thy softer feelings e'er annoy."

XII.

Young Graham hath gain'd the lofty hall :
 In front a massive pillar shone ;
And topp'd upon that column tall,
 A hero's image rose from stone.
That hero was the poet-king,
 Who, when in English donjon bound,
Of Joan Beaufort's charms did sing.
 And sweet the captive monarch's found.
An ancient spear may here be seen ;
 A weighty lance hangs on the wall,
That had at Harlaw's battle been ;
Here, too, a massive shield is shown ;
 And here a trumpet, at whose call
The ready vassals' steps were known.
The pictures cheer the gazer's eye ;

Nor less the trophied statuary :
Of Venice polished marble, here
Ten mighty warriors' busts appear !

XIII.

*' Ruthven, if yet within my reach
You ere should chance to stray,
Direful the lesson I will teach
Thee, coward, of thy way !'*

Such accents from fierce Ruthven broke,
Who shelter'd by a shaggy oak ;—
Reftless was his slender form ;
Subdued he seem'd by gathering rage ;
Madden'd his brain beneath the storm
Of growing spleen he sought to wage
On William Graham : he call'd Hell's aid,
And loud a dreadful oath he made !
Then stared around ;—treach'rous his eye
Hollow'd his pale, death-speaking cheek ;
Low was his forehead ; and his cry
Rough in extreme ; his body weak,
Though built on ample limbs ; his talk
Was all of self : the country knew
His actions, and disdain'd them too !
He rested in anxiety,
While musing pass'd our hero by ;

And as he lay the oak beneath,
Eager he caught each passing breath ;
And as he heard his uncouth name,
Flash'd from his eye the ireful flame.
“ *Revenge on me !* ” he groaning cried,
Turning his restless form aside.
And still more angry turn'd his cry.
“ Thanks for your boldness : I shall try
The issue of a future day,
And thus the challenge shall repay !
‘ *Revenge on me !* ’ that thought is vain !
I've the advantage—odds are mine ;
Nor, crestèd youth, shall I refrain
To try thy father weak in time—
That he my story lifts is plain !
Graham, I have injured thee before,
And Ruthven vengeance seeks once more !
Then speed thee, pioneer of sorrow !
O ! haste thee, over-welcome morrow !
Then shall the furies of my soul
Vent all my passion at thy knoll,
Craighall !—That ruler of his heart,
Mary Montgomery, mine should be ;
And subtle was the unworthy art
Made her estrange her love from me.
’Tis this that makes me ever sad—

And lefs hath driven another mad :
'Tis this that robs me of my reft.
Was ever mortal fo opprest ?
Depend, a day of reck'ning's near,
When gilded juftice fhall appear.
O hafte thee, time ! to-morrow come !
I long to fee what may be done."
Thus faid, he took the rugged road :

 A lonely houfe appear'd in fight—
Defigning Ruthven's lone abode.

 How picturesque in moonlight night !
'Twas heathery roof'd : the fwelling rains
Which deluge the adjacent plains
Bespoke deftruftion :—fuch a fcene
Is feldom fancied in a dream.

XIV.

On Ocean's front the purple ray
Of dawn foretells approaching day :
Still higher rides the folar beam,
 Drinking the dewdrop from the fields ;
And now each airy minftrel yields
 Libation of untutor'd fong,
 Heard all the dells and crags among.
And here the peafant may be feen
 Watching his herd upon the plain ;

Heard is the pointed fickle's noise,
Falls to the ground the yellow grain.
Many the other welcome joys
That morning's radiant blush imparts ;
Vig'rous from sleep Creation starts.

XV.

How beautiful the garden's bloom,
Rounding the lofty mansion's side :
The tulip and the lily's plume
Welcome the rose's ruddy pride ;
Lordly the venerable oaks
That overlook the circled lakes,
Where oft the oarman's splashing strokes
The soft repose of evening breaks.
Still farther, by the avenue,
Here may the veering optics view
A pleasant, bubbling fountain play ;
Behold a miniature cascade,
Which art for ornament hath made.
Yonder an artificial den
Attracts the wondering stranger's ken ;
And there arise the ruins grey
Of Abbey, where mafs oft was laid,
And pray'rs for Craighall's heroes made.
Here oft the aged and the poor

Rejoiced at monkish charity ;
And here the ever open door
A refuge to the wanderer gave,—
To bleeding knight and warrior brave !

Here too, mayhap, our annals lay,
When ignorance unblushing reign'd,
And credulity its hold maintain'd !

XVI.

Away a hunting party rode
From Craighall to the distant moor—
Away by Ruthven's lone abode
Went Henry and his comrades four.
He watch'd the brave knight passing by
(For William was not there),
And bitter, galling was the cry
That stung the father's ear !
Immediately his choler rose,
And instantly he swore,
That ne'er a son, nor one of his,
Should speak Montgomery more !
“ What ! ” as he foam'd, “ my darling boy
Become the mate of such a toy !
The heir of all my lands, shall he
Be knit and kneel to poverty !
O that my high ambition stirr'd

His breast, and he had never err'd !
Perhaps a channel I may find
T' oppose the current of his mind.
I, who have climb'd the topmast high
When tempests wild disturb'd the sky—
I, who beheld the raving breeze
Raise every turmoil on the seas—
I who, adventurous, kept the right
Of powerful Blake in desprate fight—
I, favour'd by nobility
And all the friends of liberty,—
Survey the actions of my son,
And wonder at his heart thus won !
This night my feelings I'll explode—
Witness my oath, Almighty God !

XVII.

He paused ; but heavier anger came
On the enraged Sir Henry Graham.
As when intoxication fills
The muddy brain, anon it reels ;
Such aspect the old seaman wore,
From all the floods of grief he bore !
The fun his western course hath made,
For daylight now begins to fade—
Fades in the twilight's borrow'd hue,

And sinks in the nocturnal blue.
The sport is o'er ; the hunters' tread
On Craighall's avenues are heard :
Known is the clamour in the court—
The clamorous boast of endless sport.
But ah ! the sea-knight's measured tone
Nor boast had either listener known ;
Still kept his mind this deep dismay—
Thoughts of his son on's spirits prey.

XVIII.

To Gayford turn. The mother broke
An hour of silence ; thus she spoke :
“ O Mary dear, last night I dream'd,
And strange indeed the vision seem'd ;
Such horrors never cross'd my brain
Since Bothwell saw thy father slain !
Thy father—ah ! that gentle friend—
That model of a feeling mind !
No, since I my dear husband lost,
Like scenes my fancy hath not cross'd :
And shall I all the forms name ?
No ; better I conceal the same.
Suffice, my daughter, they forbode
And shadow ills that we must bear.
Oh ! ever Sorrow's dreary load

Crushing our house, seems to appear !
Then, Mary, stay thee for the night,
I fear to lend thee from my fight.
Stay, daughter, stay—a mother's pray'r,
Perchance a faithful mother's tear,
Shall keep my cherish'd daughter here !"

XIX.

"Cease, mother, with thy terrors ; still
Above them all is Mary's will.
Such might the unletter'd villain sway—
The villain born but to obey ;
But ne'er shall education give

To augur'd tales attention—Nay !
Enough they in the shadow live—
Enough they vanish in the day.
For such, O mother, shall I stay,
While William waits me to receive ?

Already he is on his way—
Already, mother, it is eve.

"Vain, daughter, all thy reasoning yet.

Can what is rooted in the mind
By the sharp sting of furrowing fate—

Fate form'd too well such thoughts to bind—
Be thus, my daughter, torn asunder,
Even although tales of wonder ?

Say not I try thy loves to sever ;
Far from my warmest wish—O never !
Admired the youth ; his equal none.

Yet pray, remember what I said,—
Mayhap, before to-morrow come,
My old, my weather-worn eyes
Shall anguish vent by many sighs :
Remember this, beloved maid !

XX.

Here now with true parental love
The softer passions nobly strove :
“ I gave my word ; that word, I trow,
Seems to me solemn as a vow.”
Then went she from the cottage side,
And sharply gain'd the trysting mount ;
Here Mary, with becoming pride,
Rush'd to her William's arms as wont.
A gloom across his mind doth ride,
Which borrow'd frankness strives to hide—
Ah vain ! “ Fly, Mary !—let us fly,
The truth no longer I'll conceal :
Distressing was my father's cry,
It did his anger stern reveal ;
He rudely to my study came
Two hours ago—downcast I left ;

His threat'ning words I cannot name,
Indeed he seem'd of sense bereft.

XXI.

Now, bent on wrong within the wood,
The diabolic Ruthven stood !
A frenzy seized his frantic brain,
And poignant surely was the pain !
Woe to the man who boldly flies
Within his reach—the intruder dies !
And to himself, in angry mood,
He spoke of vengeance and of blood !
“ Now shall Resentment spread its thorns,
And, hydra-like, display its forms ;
And now shall Vengeance triumph here,
And glory that my foe is near !
Shall injured Love her wrongs display,
And o'er her trophy smile she may ;
Keen burns in me undying rage—
O ! that I could him now engage !
Montgomery, what was love before
Now flames in me as deadly hate ;
Depend that I shall clear the score,
And rob thee of thy proffer'd mate ! ”

XXII.

Fail'd he in search of youthful Graham,
And nearer to the mansion came ;
Rush'd from the hall an aged man,
Who pass'd in anxious haste the lawn—
Prepared the desperate Ruthven now
To execute his bloody plan,
And thus fulfil his demon vow ;
Nor could his eye distinguish who
Towards the west so quickly drew—
Perhaps the darkness of the night
Excused the fiery Ruthven's fight.
He thought that William here should pass.
Prepared his firelock—ready now, alas !
He aim'd a sure, a deadly wound,
Stretch'd Henry Graham upon the ground.
He cried for help—that help was near,
For William and the guests appear !
They heard the noise : dread Ruthven fled,
And soon his distant hamlet made—
Boasting that William Graham had met
An awful and unlook'd for fate.
Sir Henry heard his murderer named,
The same who had his son defamed :
“ William,” the dying seaman cried,

And, as the gen'rous youth he eyed—
“Forgive, forgive,” he mutter'd low,
The blood still gushing from his heart—
“Forgive,” again he said; and lo!
In this last fit did life depart.

XXIII.

Scarce need we tell that justice fought,
And to its bar fierce Ruthven brought:
A murderer's forfeit soon he paid—
Was forth unto the scaffold led!
The country gloried in his fall,
His hated race was scorn'd by all;
Nor need we say that William made
A wife of Gayford's blooming maid!



The Pirate.

TEN weary years have roll'd away
Since red Culloden's dreadful day :
The gallant Cavalier* survives,
And still at old Auchiries lives.

Stript of his family title, he
Lives lonely in obscurity.
His lands have to a stranger gone,
Unto the vassalage unknown ;
Vain all the searches for him made,
And all the offers for his head !
A dreary cell, fast by the wave,†
Awhile the warrior refuge gave ;

* Lord Forbes of Pitligo.

† Cowhaven, in the parish of Aberdour, Aberdeenshire.

But now his manly strength is gone,
But not the name his prowess won !

Ere Charles brave his standard raised,
And fiery cross through Badenoch blazed ;
Secluded from the busy world,
The foil a happy peasant turn'd—
Retainer of Pittligo was,
Who favour'd much the Stuart cause.
He rose with morning to his toil,
And wealth him favour'd for a while ;
His labour o'er, he loved to tell
What in his early days befell :
Deep versed the peasant seemed to be
In Forbes genealogy !
The story of his fathers, too,
Each visitant's attention drew.
Sometimes, in rustic measure strong,
Was heard an ancient rural song ;
The weather was a favourite theme,
And stocks and harvests he had seen.
The general topics of the times,
He at the smithy learn'd betimes ;
In his unlearn'd companions' eyes
His firm opinions seem'd as wise.
How like a vassal he obey'd

All the demands his Baron made !
At parish church on Sunday he
Appeared with all his family ;
A frugal and a virtuous wife
Cheerful made his rustic life.
A gallant son and blooming daughter,
Made him a truly happy father.
Of Helen much he loved to boast,
Already was her name a toast ;
Many the suitors that did come
Unto the jovial harvest-home.
The wily matron mother's art
Seems to have sway'd the daughter's heart.
Young Allan Forbes, the miller's son,
Had oft to Ritchie's cottage come ;
He spent his winter evenings there,
Courting the young, the charming fair.
The social glass was handed round,
And Forbes was a votary found.
Ritchie was affable and free,
And kept his own distillery ;
The many arts the excise tried,
The cunning farmer all defied !

In Helen's breast the flame of love,
Delight for trapping Allan wove !

The youthful pair tryfts often fet,
And near the fhore the lovers met.
Along the fandty beach they roved,
For Allan early ocean loved—
Admired the brave and gallant men
Who venturous plough'd the troubled main—
Columbus' life had thus inspired,
And all his youthful ardour fired :
The ftory of bold Gama, too,
The penetrating Forbes knew ;
And from great Cabot he had learn'd
How wealth and honour might be earn'd.

A pleafant picture this, till war
Did all thefe early pleafures mar.
With grief ftamp'd on his open face,
The youth his Helen did embrace ;
The tears flood watery in his eyes,
At length they melted into cries—
Simply he told that he muft go,
And face the Hanoverian foe ;
His Baron at Edina was,
There he fupported Charles' caufe ;
“ I glory, Helen, at the found,
In battle-field is honour found ;
And yet I mourn I this muft tell,

And bid thee, loved one, *adieu* !”
Pale now the charming maid appears,
Her beauteous cheeks are wet with tears—
Enough stern manhood this to bend,
And make the female heart his friend !
A slow reply the maiden made :
She told her stalwart brother had
Been also summoned. Much she fear’d
That he, a brother much endear’d,
From his superior boldness might
Fall in the expected bloody fight.
She fear’d her Allan’s safety too—
Pain’d much her heart that word, “ *adieu* ;”
He press’d her ruby lips—her hand
He circled with a silver band ;
Twice seven sparkling cairngorms,
The silver bracelet’s side adorns !
Pledging to meet again, they sever—
Would fortune bless the loved and lover

The youth at Prestonpans fought well,
As Scotland’s stirring annals tell ;
In England was his bravery known,
And gallant he at Falkirk shone !
’Twas here his Helen’s brother met
A worthy Scottish soldier’s fate.

The princely Charles' active eye
Beheld the valiant peasant die—
The prince of active Forbes heard,
And named him of his body-guard.

Dreadful Culloden has been fought,
And Allan Forbes a refuge sought.

Still swell'd his heart with Highland pride,
Disgrace the youth could not abide ;
He swore he ne'er return would home
Till fame or fortune he had won !
The greatest hazard he would try,
For nought could daunt his bravery.
From search of piercing Cumberland
He with a small but faithful band
Escaped : they venturous fought the sea,
And there display'd their gallantry.

Ten times the circling earth had run
Around that central orb the sun.
The bravest of Pittligo's men
Had in this bloody war been slain.
The land of mirth and pleasure now
Nought but adversity could shew.
The peasant's stamp of wretchedness

Bespoke a growing wilderNESS.
Deep melancholy Ritchie sway'd,
Damp'd was the mother and the maid—
That stalwart youth, his father's pride
And mother's hope, for ever fled!
And, with a feeling heart, he grieves
The loss of many relatives.
Deep the laments for Allan made,
The gallant youth they fancied dead—
“What cause have we to struggle here
Sever'd from all that makes life dear?”
The deep desponding Ritchie said:
His spouse's tears the sadness fed—
“One by one my friends have gone;
Unfriended, I am left alone!
Our mighty lord no more retains
An inch of all his native plains.
He was a landlord true and kind,
And dignified his noble mind!
How different his successors: they
Seem Mammon only to obey.
And let us, ere our all be gone,
And ere our fading strength is done,
O'er wide Atlantic seek a home.
There is my elder brother known—
There pristine pleasures may awake,

And happy yet an old man make ;
There may our virtuous daughter gain
The hand of some kind, gen'rous swain.
In this event, would sorrow cease—
Would sorrow find its vent in peace.
Your motherly advice I ask,
To aid me in this weighty task."
The frugal spouse then made reply :
" Not that I have no tender tie
With I to leave the Scottish soil,
And bid farewell to Britain's isle,
But that I see approaching fast
Poverty's degrading blast :
An increased rent we cannot pay,
Nor tyrant landlord shall obey ;
Then let us from such vortex steer,
While yet our funds can keep us clear.
Your brother's station is advanced,
His wealth and greatness much enhanced—
I think, with justice, we may leave,
Nor at our quick departure grieve."

The daughter next gave her consent—
Well was her just opinion meant :
She fancied that her Allan yet
Might on Virginian soil be met.

Many the offers she had spurn'd,
For sure her truest, earliest love yet burn'd;
Deep rooted in her bosom, she
Could not conceal its ardency.

Already hath the vessel sail'd,
For favouring winds the while prevail'd.
Twice twenty emigrants she bore,
Who look'd for rich Virginia's shore.
Gently the wind begins to rise,
When, lo! a barque the captain eyes:
She nears, alas! a pirate this!—
“A pirate, seamen, makes for us!
Spread, sailors, spread thy every sail—
Stretch all thy canvases to the gale!
There yet is hope, our ship is fleet,
And may the pirate's aim defeat.”
Immediately this toil is o'er,
The vessel scuds the winds before;
The emigrants, with tremor fraught,
Already fancied they were caught—
That they 'd be made the pirate's slaves,
Or meet with death in ocean's waves.
All thoughts of future wealth have fled,
Of cherish'd life all are afraid!
Old Ritchie's and his daughter's yells

The terrors of each mind betells;
The captain saw their spirits fade,
And thus a short address he made:
“Dispel thy fears, for never yet
So fleet a vessel have I met
As that which thee conveys—full oft
Have I Algerian corsair left;
Or, if the worst must shortly come,
Let every man to weapon run,
For all have something now to lose;
To yield, I know, no man will choose.
What are these pirates?—They are men,
In this you equal are to them;
Ours the defence, and boldly, too,
We’ll show the mettle of the crew!”

All terrors now began to fly,
Hope brighten’d up each fading eye;
Already some began to boast
Of how they would maintain their post.
Aloft his eyes the captain rears,
For too much sail his vessel bears.
Alas! now one top-gallant mast bends—
It breaks, and in the brine descends;
The top-sail, too, is borne away,
It also greets the dashing spray.

Wanted bravery forakes
The crew ; on them the pirate makes.
Two hundred yards hath he to run,
Another treasure may be won !
“ Yield ! ” the gallant rover cried—
To this the captain ne’er replied.
Gently the wind begins to fade—
Still on the ship the corsair made.
Increased the master pirate’s ire,
He on the ship begins to fire ;
He gains her side—this doth afford
His brother pirates time to board.
He also leaps into the ship,
Asks boldly where the treasures sleep.
The captain this disdain’d to tell,
And in the desp’rate struggle fell.
With dirks the sailors vengeance fought—
With knives the emigrants now fought.
The pirates ’gan to strip the dead,
And every search for plunder made.
The females they disdain’d to slay,
But tore their jewels bright away.
The master pirate boldly fought
The treasures Helen fair had got ;
He seized her firmly by the hand—
Call’d loudly to his men to stand !

All of a sudden he did start—
Tender the thoughts that pierced her heart :
The bracelet which, ten years before,
He Helen gave, the maid still wore !
The softer passions now awoke,
And silence thus the pirate broke :
Helen, entranced, full wond'rous stared,
And fancied she her Allan heard !
"Thrice charming Helen !—ah ! that I
Am father of this butchery !
Long years of sad despondency
Have made me relish piracy :
Wilt thou my feelings now forgive,
And, long as Allan Forbes shall live,
You find shall him an alter'd man—
A faithful, true companion.
Here on this bloody deck you see
Many who fought for Charles with me.
The bravest from Pitfligo are,
All famed in 'Forty-five's' dread war.
My love is pure as heaven yet,
And Helen's like I never met ;
Let memory of the past depart,
And take me, Helen, to thy heart."

Cheer'd and downcast was she by turns,

For gathering love and sorrow burns !
The father and the mother knew
The event, and near the pirate drew.
Both were inclined to overlook
The past : Allan his course forsook !
A vow to this effect he made,
And generosity display'd !
He went and told each bold compeer ;
Advised the end of this career !
To this they nobly all agreed,
And of their many crimes were freed.
The emigrants the oblivion gave,
Now all admired the pirates brave ;
In this the sailors also joined—
True friendship hath both crews combined.
The pirate treasures were convey'd,
And safely in this vessel laid ;
The pirate ship they allow'd to ride
Without a helmsman on the tide !

The crews and emigrants soon found
A home on rich Virginia's ground.



Strathaven Castle.

I.



THE snowfalls of winter had mantled the
ground,
And swell'd into torrents Pomillon's dark
bed ;

At distance is heard the loud Kype's brawling sound,
As over the cascade its waters are led ;
Roused is the wild Aven, so classic in song,
So varied in themes all exciting of old ;
Now thorn of their herbage the trees that along
Its lofty banks frown on the precipice bold ;
And, lo ! in the distance, gleams Loudoun's round hill,
And plays at its base the Irvine's stretch'd rill.

II.

Here the eagles of Rome were outspread to the skies,
When the laurel'd Agricola swept our loved Isle :

Now gory the bravest of Caledon lies,
For the fair fun of fortune has left them the while !
Here the Knights of the Temple, from Asia return'd,
The champions who figured in Turkish crusade,
While the strength and the pride of the Ottoman burn'd;
In the cause of the cross and religion they bled,
And the temple of Judah, now faded, maintain'd,—
Untenured the lordship of Darvel obtain'd.

III.

Here Wallace the mighty met Scotland's proud foes ;
With his small faithful body the English he foil'd ;
For seemly gigantic his prowess arose !
See there, to his mem'ry, a cairn is piled.
Here Pembroke met Bruce with the rude mountaineers ;
The valley the host of great Edward beheld.
How deadly the pierce of the sharp Scottish spears,
For Robert triumphant rides first on the field.
Here the rude oaks of Caledon shelter'd her deer,
And still on the marshes their huge trunks appear.

IV.

Here, elated with victory, fierce Balfour high stood,
Deem'd Covenant's hero and Presbyter's friend ;
And still here the offspring of gentlest blood
On each anniversary devotions forth send

To the great God of battles, who favour'd the cause
For which our loved fathers in myriads fell.
On the traveller's keen eye an obelisk draws,
Which simply records on its side the war tale.
In pristine simplicity the peasant still dwells,
And boasts of his Scotland, her moors and her hills.

V.

Turn now to Pomillon, on whose western edge
The huge Gothic pile of Strathaven is seen ;
But the full weight of years and the elements' rage
Have changed to a fragment what fortrefs had been.
'Twas Murdoch the Regent that reared the walls,
And doughty black Douglas held here princely sway.
The vassals of Clydesdale awoke at his call,
And follow'd the high Earl to battle or fray.
Ah ! woe to the foe who beheld his advance,
For subjection or ruin gleam'd bright on his lance !

VI.

When the Douglas rebellion was crush'd by his fire,
When attainted his titles and wide-circled fields,
And extinguish'd the spark of his ancestors' fire—
How oft unto justice ambition thus yields !—
To Stewart the rich lordship of Aven was given,
With its castle, so oft by the valiant assail'd,

The valiant so oft from its ample front driven ;
By its side each retainer his rude hamlet held.
Activity triumphs ; the shuttle and loom,
And high sound of commerce, betoken the town.

VII.

The fair Margaret Stewart in a room lonely sat,
When enter'd her uncle, great Avendale's lord :
High shone his red count'nance with bright hope elate ;
Suspense for the while seem'd to hang on his word.
" What ! once cherish'd Margaret," he nervously said ;
" Wilt thou yet refuse the bold Baron of Clyde ?
Lord Nethan, who long to me visits hath made :
He is gen'rous and brave ; his dominions are wide ;
His vassals are many—all valiant in fight :
This, Margaret, he offers—he'll wed thee to-night."

VIII.

" What ! wed me to-night ! this is surely a dream.
What ! wed me to-night ! to the Baron I hate !
No ! never, my uncle ! this madness doth seem,
For never shall I with that rude warrior mate.
Full oft hath he tried my soft passions to sway ;
His conduct's repulsive indeed to my heart.
Well knows he my mind : then, idea, away ;
Let the thought of such union for ever depart,

For true is the flight my soft passions now take—
To another, my uncle, my amours I make.”

IX.

“ Another, my niece ! O avaunt such a thought !
For to-night the great Baron of Nethan comes here.
Rejoice, O my Margaret, he falls to thy lot.
Proceed to thy chamber, and gaily appear
In robes of the brightest that Scotland can shew ;
And the lands of Drumclog I shall give as thy dower.
Already the ladies affemble ; and lo !
Great Nethan comes quickly. O blessed the hour
When the Abbot of Paisley shall stand forth in pride,
And hail thee, sweet Margaret, as Lord Nethan's bride !”

X.

“ Never, never, alas !—I have sworn it—O never !
My heart is another's, and no longer my own.
My uncle, 't were vain me from Walter to sever ;
More courteous and kind than he never was known.”
Away went the Baron in sorrowful mood ;
The stings that him tortured no pen can express ;
Suffice that his brow told a gathering of blood,
And sorrow and anger seem'd stamp'd on his face.
“ Another ! how vain ! shall he stand in the path—
A vassal of mine—when my word brings him death ?”

XI.

“ What though my squire, Walter Cochrane, is bold,
And forth on the red field triumphant did ride,
When the death-speaking weapons were vig'rously
roll'd,
And thousands rejoiced in the downfall of Boyd;
Or when civil war dark destruction had spread,
And the blood of the noblest lay swimming around;
Or when Scotland's high monarch summon'd my aid,
First he through the moors to Linlithgow did bound:
Of all my great vassalage, he's greatest by far—
The gentlest in peace, and the bravest in war !

XII.

“ But my word to Lord Nethan th' act justifies,
For the heart and the thoughts of the vassal are mine;
Nor the wailing of women, nor all his loud cries,
Can lessen the deed that must shortly be done;
For ne'er shall the blood of Aven's chiefs proud
In the veins of a vassal contaminate run !
Never yet unto meanness a Stewart hath bow'd,
And nought but the noblest a Stewart hath won—
A Stewart now sits upon Fergus' high throne,
And we of a branch of this family are come.”

XIII.

Away went the Baron ; a villain obtain'd,
Inured to fell hardships, at death seem'd to smile ;
The name of a murderer his deeds him obtain'd ;
Long'd he for the blood of young Walter the while ;
The Baron's still whisper high transport him gave,
And the words of reward sounded well in his ear.
Sought he for colleague a like dastard knave ;
And now the dark demons as loitering appear—
The gallant Squire, thoughtless, still paced the hall floor,
When heavy the steps that he heard at the door.

XIV.

Rush'd now to the hall the wild dealers in blood,
Whose looks sanction'd some desp'rate act of revenge.
As caught by surprise the brave Walter now stood,
Suspicious, alas ! of some heart-rending change.
They bore him away to a dark, frowning cell ;
Ah ! vain was the struggle for liberty tried.
Here the captive doth pine, and despondency dwell,
And here are the words of confessor denied ;
When the weapons of death the brave Cochrane here
eyed,
Oft, oft for his Margaret he bitterly figh'd.

XV.

“ Tyrannic, the Baron, o'erlooking my worth,
Who hired these assassins to th' act that shall stain
(For the world and freedom shall herald it forth)
And with infamy brand the Lord Avendale's name.
Not even the fierce savage of African wild,
Nor unbridled Tartar of ravaging horde
Of great Tamerlane, who fair Asia despoil'd,
Could thus my fidelity unexampled reward !
Can this be the summa—this the price of my faith—
A cruel, ignominious, and degrading death !

XVI.

“ Unmerited death ! and denied e'en the fight
Of th' accuser whose name I so boldly maintain'd ;
For him I have conquer'd and slain many wight,
In fierce Scottish war and in Border fray famed ;
Of the acts unapprised for which I must die.
My dear blooming Margaret !—how blessed the
found !—
For one lone embrace, and one only, I fight ;
For thee, oh my eyeballs are turn'd around ;
But turn'd all in vain ; that our love must expire
Ere it has expanded its pure virgin fire !

XVII.

“ Can this be for love, for thou first loved me :
If so, unto death I would willingly bend.
Could I think, my dear Margaret, it shelter would thee,
My head—O ! for thee—I had quickly extend !
I would willingly close the affairs of this life,
And long for the future of good and of bliss.
Oh ! happy, when Death sets his seal on the strife,
And closes mortality, woe, and distress !
We meet shall again after few fleeting years,
When the bright joys of heaven shall have dried all thy
tears !

XVIII.

A huge spear is raised, 'tis all rusty with gore—
The dreadful assassins seem'd to smile at the fight :
Marble the hue that young Walter now wore,
While seemly gigantic he summon'd his might.
The name of the murderer is call'd in the hall,
And the sound of the Baron has reach'd his sharp ear,
Prepared the dark villain to answer the call,
He hands to his colleague the knife and the spear,
Who struck the young Cochrane—his vigorous arm
Defended his breast, and repulsed the alarm !

XIX.

The spear Walter seized from the wavering hand
Of the desp'rate assassin, and him stretch'd at his foot ;
And now, as avenger, our hero doth stand—
His once threat'ning en'my is silent and mute.
Such deeds of despair due despatch doth require—
The heart of the murd'rer is sever'd in two :
Our hero, triumphant, beholds him expire,
Then quick as the wing'd sheet of lightning he flew,
And with one well laid on Vulcanian stroke,
The bars of the old grated window he broke !

XX.

He look'd o'er the wall, and prepared for the leap,
Pomillon was noisy, and favour'd his cause :
But what though the mound was wild, rocky, and steep,
He ne'er for a moment of such thought could pause.
He leapt, and in safety the grass gain'd below.
The evening now told his approach on the skies,
And the breezes of Boreas still hoarsely do blow :
The rain falls in torrents—the melted snow hies
To a channel : gay the assemblage that comes—
How stalwart the knights, bright their daughters and
sons !

XXI.

Lord Nethan arrived, and he walk'd near the cell
So lately the scene of this savage affray !
When the dastard who left on the noble lord fell—
All of a sudden interrupted his way !
They knew not each other, for Darkness had spread
His covering of fable within the rude walls.
Ah ! little dreamt Crawford his colleague lay dead,—
Now, alas ! on the corpse of that colleague he falls !
He seized the Lord Nethan, enraged, by the throat,
As the spear by the side of fierce Jackson he fought !

XXII.

* * * * *
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* * * * *
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Fair Margaret, of young Walter's safety afraid,
Now hies to her chamber all lone in distress—
How rending the cries that the sweet female mad,
For her tenderest ties she attempts to confess !
She dreaded her uncle her Walter had found—
That he in the donjon lay fetter'd and bound.

XXIII.

“ To see him were heaven ! to arrange for our flight—
For to him may all secrets of Margaret be told !
Chill and unpleasant is the dark frosty night,
That in camp pains the foldier, so fearless and bold.
How welcome to him is the gay glance of morn—
Such unto me is the sight of my Walter !
Since we parted full many the pains I have borne,
With the fortitude—yes—of a High Steward’s
daughter.
O give me again the blest object I love,
That I with my Walter by Aven may rove !

XXIV.

“ Again, if that can be but hoped—oh ! again
To think, my dear Walter, of cold separation !
Down, down with the thought, for its import is vain,
And pregnant to me with most poignant vexation.
If my fierce uncle’s ire can have robb’d thee of life,
Sure thou with the seraphs art joyful in heaven !
No more cursed earth shall behold me in strife,
Since the power thee to follow, my Walter, is given.
But, oh ! if in donjon thou, loved one, should pine,
Depressing the thoughts that must ever be mine.

XXV.

“ But I'll solve the doubt in a minute's short space,
I'll forward and eye the dark den's awful mouth,
And see if my lover I yet may embrace,
Or meet with fights horrid, unwelcome, uncouth.”
Thus mused the bright gem of the wild Aven vale,
When a sound, lo! like Walter's, caught her sharp
ear ;
That sound was a lover's—a lover's sad wail ;
'Twas the voice that the lady so oft loved to hear !
She turn'd of a sudden—look'd over the steep—
And there saw her Walter—for her he did weep !

XXVI.

The blood seem'd to gush from his arm and cheek ;
He tower'd his bright eyes, and his Margaret beheld—
He rose : ah ! his limbs and his body were weak,
But the bright flush of joy o'er his fair features roll'd.
The lady, full joyful, now leapt in his arms—
No feat, sure, too great for despair or for love !
Her boldness the heart of the gallant squire warms.
To open her mind to her lover she strove—
She spake, and her words were in favour of flight ;
Their cause was supported by darkness of night !

XXVII.

With every luxury the tables were spread—
The attendants were many, and rare to behold ;
At Strathaven before such display ne'er was made,
The nobles were many, and valiant, and bold—
They came from the Clyde, from the Nethan, and Ayr ;
And many the knights that in armour bright shone—
And many the ladies, all courteous and fair—
To match blooming Margaret there ne'er yet was
one !
Full long look'd the party for bridegroom and bride,
And loud for his niece the Lord Avendale cried.

XXVIII.

His echoes were vain, for his niece was not there ;
Now crimson the imprint of rage that he wore.
And where is Lord Nethan, the bridegroom ? oh ! where
Was like disappointment ere witness'd before !
Away to the donjon Lord Avendale ran—
Distressing the scene that now steals on his eye ;
For Nethan lies here all sickly and wan,
And the messenger pale seems as hovering nigh !
The blood-rusty weapon Lord Avendale found,
And the murd'rous vassal soon died of the wound.

XXIX.

Three years has the mighty Lord Avendale changed—

At the Abbey of Paisley he penance hath paid ;
He mourn'd for the lady he lately estranged.

Now many the friends that his clemency made—
Was loved by the great and the noble around—

His vassals long gloried to echo his praise ;
The Church, in Lord Avendale, patron now found,
And long to his mem'ry the monks shouts did raise.

Thus cruelty mirror'd and heralded forth,
Is often subverted to kindness and worth !

XXX.

From the depth of the wound, and the sorrows that prey'd

On his mind, the rejected Lord Nethan soon died.
While Cochrane and Margaret to France were convey'd,
And there by a father of Rouen were tied.

Rode Walter as knight with the famous French fire,
And the Spaniard and German oft shrunk from his
sword.

Oh ! oft has the minstrel, on heart-melting lyre,
The young squire of Aven and Margaret adored !
Many the Cochranes on Fame's roll that stand,
And still their descendants are great in that land !



Massacre of Eigg.

[The following ballad is founded on a well-known historical fact.]



EVERY chieftain of the Isles
Trembles at the princely name
Of Alifair, the great M'Leod,
Who nobly doth our homage claim !

Thus cried a bold and forward crew,
Passing rocky Eigg's rude coast ;
The sails are flapping in the wind,
And on the waves the boat is toff'd.

A broken galley beats the surge,
And human cries disturb the scene :

“Methinks,” the watchful helmsman spake,

“Familiar, sure, that voice did seem.

“Familiar, yes!”—they lower’d the sails,

The weather-beaten boatmen row’d :

And to that galley chain’d they found

Three followers of the stern M’Leod.

“M’Leod! that insult on our name!

Revenge! revenge!” the sailors cry :

“The authors of this bloody work

By some ignoble death shall die.

“But whence the cause?” the boatman asks—

“What forced the cowards to this deed?

How sweet is vengeance on a foe!

We love to see our foemen bleed.”

Lies form’d but to conceal the truth,

The fierce, inhuman captives framed ;

The horrors of the picture, sure,

Are too degrading to be named !

The captives instant refuge found :

“Our valiant chief shall learn this tale,”

Was echo'd by the incensed crew
That for Dunvegan's tower fet fail.

Clanranald's Isles they quickly clear,
And the bleak western shore of Skye ;
And, passing through the Tollart's fwell,
The ancient Danish tower draws nigh.

Dunvegan's huge romantic pile,
The work of Scandinavian hands,
Was rear'd when Eric braved the world,
And fought the Pict and Saxon bands.

Here shone in arms the brave M'Leod,
Attended by his faithful bard—
Whose songs in honour of the clan
So oft its warlike members heard.

Full oft the piper's martial notes
Ring in the patriarchal hall ;
The squire and gillie here attend,
And lift the mountain chieftain's call.

Unmatch'd for hospitality
Is he, sprung from great Rory More ;

Now round he hands the mighty cup
That Somerled had quaff'd of yore.

The captives drown the notes of joy,
How melancholy their complaint !
The lift'ning father of the clan
Thus gave his growing passion vent :—

“ Go, slaughter now the mountain goat,
And burn the crofs of hazel-wood—
Extinguish then the rising flame,
In the victim's reeking blood.

“ Send forth this signal of alarm,
To rouse the warlike men of Skye ;
For by the sword of stern M'Leod
Clanranald's savage tribe shall die !”

An hundred hardy Celts appear'd
Dunvegan's ample front before ;
Rejoiced each plaided warrior,
Brandishing his dark claymore.

“ Go, man the boats,” the chieftain said,
“ And I the noble pomp shall swell ;”

Ten monstrous galleys cut the tide,
And for Eigg's fated island sail.

Fated, alas ! the Islesmen learn
The approach of their terrific foe—
“ O how shall we this force resist ?
Unaided, how repel the blow ?

“ Our daughters ravish'd in our fight
By this fierce avenging race ;
'Twas ours, alas ! to witness, too,
Augmented scenes of deep disgrace.

“ O let us to the cavern fly,
And there evade stern Creloch's wrath,
For sure that haughty Gael has fix'd
On some unwelcome game of death.”

The counsell'd natives swiftly rush'd
Unto the vast, the ample cave ;
Another rough and hollow'd rock
Three aged warriors refuge gave.

M'Leod arrived : descending snows
Mantled Scoor Rigg's lofty brow—

Increased the fury of that chief,
In absence of his timid foe.

Thrice paced his men the unhappy Isle—
The muddy huts ascend in flames;
The work of plunder is complete,
But slaughter still the chieftain aims.

Two days he search'd for Francis Cave—
Two days he search'd, but all in vain!
Prepared the morning of the third
To seek Dunvegan's tower again.

Uneasy in the dreary den
The islanders sent forth a spy,
And from a galley's deck his form
Caught a sharp seaman's glancing eye.

Fruitless the attempts M'Donald made,
His treach'rous footprints to conceal.
Ah, fatal! for the trodden snow
Doth the vast cavern's front reveal.

Rejoiced M'Leod: at the den's mouth
He ask'd the daftards who had chain'd

And sent his followers to the sea,—
If such within its bounds remain'd ?

Proud of their hold, the answer "No"
Was syllabled by every tongue—
"We are the injured," from the cave,
Loud as M'Donald's war cry rung.

Glowing with hate the chieftain spoke—
"Divert the silvery stream which flows
By the cave's mouth, that I may lave
On this proud race relentless woes."

'Tis done : bared is the heathery Isle
Of heath to minister revenge—
Choked the den's mouth—now lit the fire,
And smoke doth through the cavern range.

Still burns the proud avenger's fire—
The Islesmen's dying agonies
High flowing pleasure did afford
To their attested enemies.

Alas ! that history should record
This shocking, dark, barbarian tale—
That such atrocity should lower
Our estimation of the Gael !

Finis.



